(d) In order to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers of cotton in the country, Government notifies Minimum Support Prices (MSP) on the basis of recommendations made by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The CCI has been purchasing entire Fair Average Quality (FAQ) grade cotton offered by the cotton farmers in various market yards. To avoid distress sale by farmers, the CCI has also been purchasing kapas three stages below FAQ grade with suitable price adjustment. Further, Government of India has also nominated National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of India Limited (NAFED) as the second agency for procurement of cotton under MSP.

Chemicals used in ripening of mangoes

418. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that harmful chemicals like calcium carbide are being used to artificially ripen mangoes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that no action is taken by the concerned authorities to prevent such a practice; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action proposed to be taken by Government to check such hazardous practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Under PFA Rules, 1955 use of calcium carbide gas for ripening of fruits is prohibited.

(c) and (d) The PFA Act, 1954 and PFA Rules, 1955 are implemented by the State/UT Governments, who takes samples of food items and take action under the provisions of the PFA Act, in case the samples are found not confirming to the standard or there is a violation of a rules. The State Governments are advised from time to keep vigil for checking food adulteration. To check the hazard of calcium carbide, an alternative method for repening of fruits have been developed by ICAR. The fruits are exposed to ethylene gas at a concentration of 10 to 100 ppm (0.001 to 0.01%) in airtight rooms for 24 hrs at 20-25C and 90-95 per cent RH. The fruits may also be treated with ethrel/ethephon in hot

water at 52—2C for 5 minutes having a concentration of 100-500 ppm depending upon maturity and variety.

Setting up of a National Fisheries Development Board in Hyderabad

419. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been formulated to set up a National Fisheries Development Board in Hyderabad to study various aspects of supporting tuna and deep-sea fishing in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its present status; and

(c) the projected estimates of potential of the tuna and deep-sea fishing in earning foreign exchange and for employment generation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The National Fisheries Development Board has been registered under the Andhra Pradesh Societies Registration Act, 2001 and is located at Hydeabad. The Board shall co-ordinate activities pertaining to fisheries undertaken by different Ministries/Departments in the Central Government and also work in coordination with the State/Union Territories Governments to improve production, processing, storage, transport and marketing of the products of capture and culture fisheries.

(c) The estimated deep sea fishery potential in our Exclusive Economic Zone is about 2,73,000 tonnes, out of which, the tuna resources alone is about 2,12,500 tonnes. No precise information regarding the estimated foreign exchange earnings and employment generation on account of exploiting the estimated deep sea fishery potential is available which depend upon various factors such as type of species harvested, fishing methods adopted, marketing trend etc.

Contract farming

420. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to'state:

(a) whether Government propose to institutionalize contract farming in the country;